

INTRODUCTION.

177 by their intercourse with the white people, have lost much of the honourable and virtuous qualities which they once possessed, and added to their vices and immorality. Of this, no one can be a better judge than a missionary residing among them. And if, <sup>a</sup>what these people told us more than half a century ago; that lying, stealing, and other vicious acts, before the white men came among them, were considered as crimes, we may safely conclude—and we know it to be fact—that from that time to this, and especially within the last forty years, they have so much degenerated, that a delineation of their present character would bear no resemblance to what it was before.—It is therefore the history of early times, not of the present, that I have written; and to those times my delineations of their character must be considered to apply; yet, to shew the contrast, I have also delineated some of their present features.

128  
[107] It may be proper to mention in this place, that I have made use of the proper national name of the people whom we call *Delawares*, which is: "*Lenni Lenape*." Yet, as they, in the common way of speaking, merely pronounce the word "*Lenape*," I have, in most instances, when speaking of them, used this word singly. I have also made use of the word "*Mengwee*," or *Mingoes*, the name by which the *Lenape* commonly designate the people known to us by the name of the *Iroquois*, and *Five* or *Six Nations*. I shall give at the end a general list of all the names I have made use of in this communication, to which I refer the reader for instruction.

• [195] As the Indians, in all their public speeches and addresses, speak in the singular number, I have sometimes been led to follow their example, when reporting what they have said; I have also frequently, by attending particularly to the identical words spoken by them, copied their peculiar phrases, when I might have given their meaning in other words.

On the origin of the Indians, I have been silent, leaving [Lengatun. See cat. 116, p. 348. - Analyst]

THE INDIAN NATIONS.

63

"before the white people came into this country; our  
"council house\* extended far to the north and far to the  
"south. In the middle of it we would meet from all parts  
"to smoke the pipe of peace together. When the white  
"men arrived in the south, we received them as friends;  
"we did the same when they arrived in the east. It was  
"we, it was our forefathers, who made them welcome, and  
"let them sit down by our side. The land they settled on  
"was ours. We knew not but the Great Spirit had sent  
"them to us for some good purpose, and therefore we  
"thought they must be a good people. We were mista-  
"ken; for no sooner had they obtained a footing on our  
"lands, than they began to pull our council house down†  
"first at one end and then at the other, and at last meeting  
"each other at the centre, where the council fire was yet  
"burning bright, they put it out,‡ and extinguished it with  
"our own blood!§ with the blood of those|| who with us  
"had received them! who had welcomed them in our land!  
"Their blood ran in streams into our fire, and extinguished  
"it so entirely, that not one spark was left us whereby to

\* Council house here means, "Connexion District."

† Pulling the council house down. Destroying, dispersing the com-  
munity, preventing their further intercourse with each other, by set-  
tling between them on their land.

‡ Putting the fire out. Murdering them or their people, where  
they assemble for pacific purposes, where treaties are held &c.

§ Our own blood. The blood flowing from the veins of some of our  
community.

|| Alluding to the murder of the Conestogo Indians, who though  
of another tribe, yet had joined them in welcoming the white people  
to their shores.

In a narrative of this lamentable event, supposed to have been  
written by the late Dr. Franklin, it is said: "On the first arrival of  
"the English in Pennsylvania, messengers from this tribe came to  
"welcome them with presents of venison, corn and skins; and the  
"whole tribe entered into a treaty of friendship with the first propri-  
"eter, William Penn, which was to last as long as the sun should  
"shine, or the waters run in the rivers."

622 to each particular sentence, the same as we can point out  
217 a passage in a book. Belts and strings, when done with  
by the speaker, are again handed to the chief, who puts  
them up carefully in the speech bag or pouch.

202 A message of importance is generally sent on to the  
place of its destination, by an inferior chief, by a coun-  
sellor, or by the speaker, especially when an immediate  
answer is expected. In other cases, where for instance  
only an answer to a speech is to be sent, two capable  
young men are selected for the purpose, the one to deli-  
ver the message or answer, and the other to pay atten-  
tion while his companion is delivering it, that no part be  
forgotten or omitted. If the message be of a private  
nature, they are charged to draw or take it under ground,  
that is, not to make it known to any person whatsoever,  
except to him to whom it is directed. If they are told to  
enter into the earth with the message or speech, and rise  
again at the place where they are to deliver it, it is to  
desire them to be careful not to be seen by the way by  
any person, and for that purpose to avoid all paths, and  
travel through the woods.

622 No chief pays any attention to reports, though they  
202 may carry with them the marks of truth. Until he is  
officially and in due form apprised of the matter, he will,  
if questioned on the subject, reply that he had not heard  
it. It will, until then, be considered by him as the song  
of a bird which had flown by; but as soon as he is offi-  
cially informed, through a string of wampum from some  
distant chief or leading man of the nation, whose situa-  
tion entitles him to receive credit, he then will say: "I  
have heard it;" and acts accordingly.

202 The Indians generally, but their chiefs more particu-  
195 larly, have many figurative expressions in use, to under-  
stand which requires instruction. When a nation, by  
message or otherwise, speaks to another nation in this  
way, it is well understood; but when they speak to white  
people after this manner, who have not been accustomed  
to such language, explanations are necessary.

537 "and say: (Here he fixed his eyes on the commandant.)

"FATHER! Some time ago you put a war hatchet into my hands, saying: Take this weapon and try it on the heads of my enemies the *long knives*, and let me afterwards know if it was sharp and good.

"FATHER! At the time when you gave me this weapon, I had neither cause nor inclination to go to war against a people who had done me no injury; yet in obedience to you, who say you are my father and call me your child, I received the hatchet; well knowing that if I did not obey, you would withhold from me the necessities of life, without which I could not subsist, and which are not elsewhere to be procured but at the house of my father.

"FATHER! You may, perhaps, think me a fool, for risking my life at your bidding, in a cause too, by which I have no prospect of gaining any thing; for it is your cause and not mine. It is your concern to fight the *long knives*; you have raised a quarrel amongst yourselves, and you ought yourselves to fight it out. You should not compel your children, the Indians, to expose themselves to danger for your sakes.

"FATHER! Many lives have already been lost on your account!—Nations have suffered and been weakened! —Children have lost parents, brothers and relatives! —Wives have lost husbands!—It is not known how many more may perish before your war will be at an end!

"FATHER! I have said that you may, perhaps, think me a fool, for thus thoughtlessly rushing on your enemy!—Do not believe this, Father! Think not that I want sense to convince me, that although you now pre-

[95] • It will be understood that he speaks here throughout for himself and his nation or tribe, though always in the first person of the singular, according to the Indian mode.

CHAPTER XII.

METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS.

THE Indians are fond of metaphors. They are to their discourse what feathers and beads are to their persons, a gawdy but tasteless ornament. Yet we must not judge them too severely on that account. There are other nations besides the American Indians who admire this mode of expression. Even in enlightened Europe, many centuries have not elapsed since the best and most celebrated writers employed this figure in a profuse manner, and thought it a great embellishment to their poetical and prose compositions; the immortal Shakspeare, himself, did not disdain it.

The following examples will be sufficient to give an idea of the metaphorical language of the Indians.

1. "The sky is overcast with dark blustering clouds."—We shall have troublesome times; we shall have war.

2. "A black cloud has arisen yonder."—War is threatened from that quarter, or from that nation.

3. "Two black clouds are drawing towards each other."—Two powerful enemies are in march against each other!

4. "The path is already shut up!"—Hostilities have commenced. The war is begun.

5. "The rivers run with blood!"—War rages in the country.

6. "To bury the hatchet."—To make, or conclude a peace.

7. "To lay down the hatchet, or to slip the hatchet under the bedstead."—To cease fighting for a while, during a

● 195 truce; or, to place the hatchet at hand, so that it may be taken up again at a moment's warning.

8. "*The hatchet you gave me to strike your enemies, proved to be very dull, or not to be sharp; my arm was wearied to little purpose!*"—You supplied me so scantily with the articles I stood in need of, that I wanted strength to execute your orders. The presents you gave me were not sufficient for the task you imposed upon me, therefore I did little!

9. "*The hatchet you gave me was very sharp!*"—As you have satisfied me, I have done the same for you; I have killed many of your enemies.

10. "*You did not make me strong.*"—You gave me nothing, or but little.

11. "*Make me very strong!*"—Give me much, pay me well!

12. "*The stronger you make me, the more you will see!*"—The more you give me, the more I will do for you!

13. "*I did as you bid me, but SEE nothing!*"—I have performed my part, but you have not rewarded me; or, I did my part for you, but you have not kept your word!

14. "*You have spoken with your lips only, not from the heart.*"—You endeavour to deceive me; you do not intend to do as you say!

15. "*You now speak from the heart!*"—Now you mean what you say.

16. "*You keep me in the dark!*"—You wish to deceive me; you conceal your intentions from me; you keep me in ignorance!

17. "*You stopped my ears!*"—You kept the thing a secret from me; you did not wish me to know it!

18. "*Now I believe you!*"—Done! agreed! It shall be so!

19. "*Your words have penetrated into my heart!*"—I consent! am pleased with what you say!

20. "*You have spoken good words!*"—I am pleased, delighted with what you have said!

21. "*You have spoken the truth!*"—I am satisfied with what you have said! 195

22. "*Singing birds!*"—Tale bearers—story tellers—liars.

23. "*Don't listen to the singing of the birds which fly by!*"—Don't believe what stragglers tell you!

24. "*What bird was it that sung that song?*"—Who was it that told that story, that lie?

25. (To a chief,) "*Have you heard the news?*"—Have you been officially informed?

26. "*I have not heard any thing!*"—I have no official information.

27. "*To kindle a council fire at such a place.*"—To appoint a place where the national business is to be transacted; to establish the seat of government there.

28. "*To remove the council fire to another place.*"—To establish another place for the seat of government.

29. "*The council fire has been extinguished.*"—Blood has been shed by an enemy at the seat of government, which has put the fire out; the place has been polluted.

30. "*Don't look the other way!*"—Don't lean to that side; don't join with those!

31. "*Look this way!*"—Join us, join our party.

32. "*I have not room to spread my blanket!*"—I am too much crowded on.

33. "*Not to have room enough for an encampment.*"—To be too much confined to a small district; not to have sufficient range for the cattle to feed on, or sufficient hunting ground.

34. "*I will place you under my wings!*"—(meaning under my arm pits) I will protect you at all hazards! You shall be perfectly safe, nobody shall molest you!

35. "*Suffer no grass to grow on the war path!*"—Carry on the war with vigour!

36. "*Never suffer grass to grow on this war path!*"—Be at perpetual war with the nation this path leads to; never conclude a peace with them.

•195

37. "To open a path from one nation to another, by removing the logs, brush and briars out of the way.—To invite the nation to which the path leads, to a friendly intercourse; to prepare the way to live on friendly terms with them.

38. "The path to that nation is again open!"—We are again on friendly terms; the path may again be travelled with safety.

39. "I hear sighing and sobbing in yonder direction!"—I think that a chief of a neighbouring nation has died.

40. "I draw the thorns out of your feet and legs, grease your stiffened joints with oil, and wipe the sweat off your body!"—I make you feel comfortable after your fatiguing journey, that you may enjoy yourself while with us.

41. "I wipe the tears from your eyes, cleanse your ears, and place your aching heart, which bears you down to one side, in its proper position!"—I condole with you; dispel all sorrow! prepare yourself for business! (N. B. This is said when condoling with a nation on the death of a chief.)

42. "I have discovered the cause of your grief!"—I have seen the grave (where the chief was buried.)

43. "I have covered you spot with fresh earth; I have raked leaves, and planted trees thereon!"—means literally, I have hidden the grave from your eyes; and figuratively, "you must now be cheerful again!"

44. "I lift you up from this place, and set you down again at my dwelling place!"—I invite you to arise from hence, and come and live where I live.

45. "I am much too heavy to rise at this present time!"—I have too much property! (corn, vegetables &c.)

46. "I will pass one night yet at this place."—I will stay one year yet at this place.

47. "We have concluded a peace, which is to last as long as the sun shall shine, and the rivers flow with water!"—The peace we have made is to continue as long as the world stands, or to the end of time.

2 [Correction, see cat. 116 p. 348, -Analyst]

THE INDIAN NATIONS.

129

48. "To bury the hatchet beneath the root of a tree."—  
To put it quite out of sight.

195

49. "To bury deep in the earth," (an injury done)—To  
consign it to oblivion.

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CHAPTER XIII.

INDIAN NAMES.

THE proper names of Indians are in general given  
to them after animals of various kinds, and even fishes  
and reptiles. Thus they are called the *Beaver*, *Otter*,  
*Sun-fish*, *Black-fish*, *Rattle-snake*, *Black-snake*, &c. They  
have also other descriptive names, from their personal  
qualities or appearances, and sometimes from fancy or  
caprice; but many of those are given them by the whites,  
such as *Pipe*, *White-eyes*, *Kill-buck*, &c. which are not real  
Indian names. They do not always preserve the names  
first given to them, but often assume a new one after they  
have come to man's estate.

551

Indians, who have particularly distinguished them-  
selves by their conduct, or by some meritorious act, or  
who have been the subjects of some remarkable occur-  
rence, have names given to them in allusion to those  
circumstances. Thus, I have known a man whose name  
would signify in our language *the beloved lover*, and one  
who was named *Met by love*. Another, a great warrior,  
who had been impatiently waiting for day-light to en-  
gage the enemy, was afterwards called *Cause day-light*,  
or *Make day-light appear*. So, one who had come in  
with a heavy load of turkies on his back, was called *The*  
*Carrier of Turkies*, and another whose shoes were gene-

553

*A History of the Indians.*

97

council in a solemn speech. If the subjects are of great importance all who take part in the discussion stand as they speak. Each counsellor has the liberty to utter his sentiments and having made his speech, sits down. No one interrupts the speaker but all sit silent and attentive as if engaged in an act of devotion. The speeches are delivered in a pleasing manner and the words of the speakers flow as readily as if they were read from a manuscript. Whoever visits such an assembly, whether white man or savage Indian, cannot but be profoundly impressed.

623

A subject is often very thoroughly and extendedly discussed. The chiefs and counsellors in turn give their opinions and suggestions. When all have spoken, one of them is called upon to sum up the principal parts of all the speeches in a concise manner. This is done extempore and the necessary amendments proposed, every subject being brought into as short and comprehensive statement as possible. Before deliberations begin, the strings and belts of wampum must be placed in due order, for whatever is said without being confirmed by them is considered vain and without effect. They are so accustomed to this that when they communicate the contents of a message, merely in private conversation, they cannot do so without something in their hands, a strap, a ribbon or a blade of grass. Holding some such thing in his hand the speaker will recount the points in proper order as with the strings or belts of wampum thereto belonging.

623  
211

When chiefs are compelled to give answer to a proposition of which they do not approve, but which they have consented to consider because they did not wish openly to offer an affront, they are able to frame their reply in so figurative and equivocal a style as to allow of almost any desired interpretation or application. Those who receive such an answer, know as little after the reply has been given as before, but are ashamed to ask further, lest they should be regarded as stupid and because chiefs are supposed to understand everything.

623  
195

When treaty of peace is made with another nation it is determined that it shall last as long as sun and moon shine or rise and set, as long as the stars are in the heavens and the rivers

648

## DELAWARE INDIAN BIG HOUSE CEREMONY

143

## IV

## FOURTH NIGHT OF THE CEREMONY

The Attendants call the men.<sup>1</sup> "Red Horns must be hereabouts!" "Good-Horns must be hereabouts!" "If he answers" the Attendant says, "Now he has answered." "Looks-like-a-Man must be hereabouts!" "Now he has answered." "Rises-at-Daybreak must be hereabouts!" "Leaf-Man must be hereabouts." "Now he has answered." "How-the-Weather-is must be hereabouts." "Now he has answered."<sup>2</sup>

The Bringer-in says, "Brothers, here is the one shoulder length of wampum. You, the first ones called, take it with you and pray outside, ten and two times. Lift the prayers on high and where he dwells our father, the Great Spirit. And while these praying ones are outside you Attendants must be ready to 'pick berries.'" Attendant come here, take one shoulder length of wampum right over there on this side where stands Our Grandfather.<sup>3</sup> There do you unstring these wampum beads. All Attendants come in, because here, soon they are going to pick berries."

Here they begin "picking berries," the Attendants, saying this, "m+!":

The speaker says, "My kindred, now it is the fourth evening since we have been worshipping here. And should any one of the hunters whatsoever have good fortune all of a sudden, some one of the drummers be careful and watch for them at once. Because you know the rule. If you hear the signal-shot run inside the Big House at once. You must sing for them."

<sup>1</sup> Now at the opening of the fourth night's performance following the departure of the hunters on their ceremonial hunting excursion, and after the Mask-Spirit has performed his antics in the Big House, the rites of the night are resumed by the Master of Ceremony who orders the Attendants to call forth certain of the old men of prominence to offer prayer for the success of the hunters. There is some honor attached to this selection, the men so singled out being called in a loud voice by their native names or titles.

The informant is pretending, in the text, that some prominent men are being called. He has changed his style of narration into the form of a monologue.

<sup>2</sup> Whereupon the men thus summoned by the Attendant answer "Hau" or "Yo," when they hear their names called and come into the Big House.

<sup>3</sup> Those whose names have been called who form a praying squad now go outside and facing eastward raise their right hands giving the prayer-call ho+ six times and hū+ six times.

<sup>4</sup> "Picking the berries" is a figure of speech referring to the action of the six Attendants, three men and three women, who crouch down and pick up the scattered wampum beads spilled as commanded on the hard ground under the center post, and cram as many as they can into their mouths. This causes some innocent mirth among the audience. They accompany the act with the sound m+ as noted in the next few lines. Their action symbolizes the habit of "birds picking up berries," (a sympathetic rite perhaps). The informant did not consider the performance to have any deep symbolical reference, but merely a method of paying extra wampum to the Attendants for their services.

<sup>5</sup> Referring in the mask-images on the center-post.

<sup>6</sup> In Harrington's account, (I, pp. 99-100) of this rite the Attendants are put down as saying "Ho-o-o!"

539x  
76

[95]